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SERIOUS EXHORTATIONS TO THE PRACTICE OF Religious Duties, BOTH *Publick and Private.*

With Some Particular

PRAYERS.

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A SERIOUS EXHORTATION TO THE PRACTICE OF Religious Duties.

Both Publick and Private.

THe Perſons for whom this Exhortation is deſign'd, and may by God's Bleſſing be in ſome meaſure uſeful, will come under one of theſe Two General Characters: They are either as want, or ſuch as have a ſerious Senſe of Piety Virtue; ſuch as are careleſs of, or ſuch as are Con- s in Religious Duties: This Addreſs is offer'd th Parties, but firſt and chiefly to thoſe that are eſs and indifferent in matters of Religion; who y believe there is a God, yet ſeems ſcarce to have in their Thoughts, nor to deſire any Acquaintance his ways: whoſe behaviour and courſe of Life is as if God were worthy of little or no Honour from or were nothing at all to them: To theſe I ſhall vour.

I. To repreſent the neceſſity and obligation they are under, to live in a ſteady Practice of Religion in General.

II. To perſuade you conſtantly to frequent the Aſſemblies for Publick Worſhip

III. To a frequent receiving of the Lord's Supper.

IV. To a Religious obſervance of the Lord's Day.

V. To the Practice of Family Duties, ſuch as Praying in, and with your Families, Reading good Books, and eſpecially the Holy Scriptures, and Catechizing and Inſtructing thoſe that are under your Care, whether Children or Servants.

But before I preſs theſe Particular Practices of Religion upon you, 'tis but fit I declare to you what is meant by Religion in general.

By Religion then is meant, the ſincere obſervance of all thoſe Duties to God, our Neighbour and ourſelves, which by the Divine Law (what ways ſoever made known) Mankind, and e pecially Chriſtians, are obliged to.

Sect. I. Now my Buſineſs ſhall be to ſhew, that Religion thus ſtated and extended, is that which all Men, eſpecially Chriſtians, are bound to, for the following Reaſons.

1. Becauſe Mens own Nature requires this of them.

2. Becauſe God's Divine Authority calls for it.

3. Becauſe their preſent and future Good depends upon it.

4. Becauſe Chriſtians Baptiſmal Engagement ſolemnly binds them to it.

5. And laſtly, becauſe 'tis this kind of Religion, and only this, that God in his reveal'd Will has preſcribed and eſtabliſhed.

1. It is that which your own Nature obliges you to. That which makes you Men, does qualify you for it. That Reaſon and Underſtanding which is your Glory and which you Glory and Pride your ſelves ſo much in, when you feel the Advantages of it in a good Bargain (as you call it) or a diſcreet management of your worldly Affairs: This Reaſon, I ſay, does capacitate you for a nobler way of Living, than either Bu-

Beasts are made for, and was never intended you, only to be imployed in the vile drudgery of your Bodies. It was given you for higher Ends, and Purposes than any that relate to a Mortal Life, and it capacitates you to know God, and to discern between Good and Evil; to know the Divine Perfections, and what is due to so excellent a Being; to know your selves, and what way of Life is most for your Comfort and Advantage; And your own Consciences within you tell you, that you cannot live like your selves, unless you thus imploy your Reason, *i. e.* unless you live Religiously, *To fear God, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil that is Understanding*, Job 28. 28.

2. This is it which God's Authority calls for. He is your Creator and Sovereign Lord; and therefore has the greatest Right to your Obedience. For nothing can be more equal than that He who made you, should Govern you; and that He who Governs you, should be honoured by you. A Son Honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master, *i. e.* those Relations do oblige Men to these Duties; *And if I be a Father*, saith God, *Where is my Honour? And if I be a Master, where is my Fear?* Mal. 1. 6, 11. If I be the Author of your Beings, and in that Respect your Father, Why do you not pay me the Duty that belongs to a Father? And if the whole World is mine, and in that Respect you are under my Authority and Government; is it not meet that you should behave your selves toward me, as Servants do towards their Lord? Thus Holy *David* enforces the Duty of Serving God from this Consideration. *Know ye, that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we our selves, we are his People, and the Sheep of his Pasture.* Psal. 100. 3. And for the same reason all the Duties of Piety and Holiness, of Justice and Charity are strictly to be observed; because in doing these things we do the Will of God, and Honour his Nature and Authority.

3. It is that which your own present and future Good depends upon. *For Godliness*, as St. *Paul* saith, *is profitable for all things, having the Promise of this Life, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. It is the wisest

courſe that a Man can take for the ſucceeding in all his Juſt and Honeſt Undertakings, the beſt means to advance a Man's Fortune, and the ſureſt way to preſerve Health and to prolong your Days. VVould you gain that Credit that you find in many caſes would be very ſerviceable to the proſpering your Affairs, and ſucceeding in your Aims; Be Juſt and Honeſt, True to your VVord, and Faithful to all your Promiſes and Engagements. For theſe are Virtues that all Men feel the benefit and neceſſity of, and therefore have always a high Eſteem of thoſe that are Friends to them. Would you enjoy an undiſturbed Peace, or thrive in your Eſtate, or have Health in your Bodies, and Marrow in your Bones; Theſe are the Fruits of Righteouſneſs and Temperance, of Purity and Chaſtity, and the like Virtues. And above all, it is the only thing that can qualifie us for the Preſence of God, and the Society and Halelujahs of Angels. A Man may probably make a tolerable ſhift in this VVorld without it. He may by Craft and Deceit, gain himſelf a Fortune in the VVorld; but he cannot go to Heaven any other way than by living Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly in this preſent VVorld. *Bleſſed is the Man*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his Ways; For thou ſhalt eat the Labour of thine Hands, happy ſhalt thou be, and it ſhall be well with thee*, Pſal. 128. 1, 2. *His Seed ſhall be mighty upon Earth, the Generation of the upright ſhall be bleſſed: Wealth and Riches ſhall be in his Houſe, and his Righteouſneſs endureth for ever. Her ways are ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all her Paths are Peace. She is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her*, Prov. 3. 13, 16, 17, 18.

4. It is that which your Baptiſmal Engagement binds you to. For when you were admitted into the Church of Chriſt, *i. e.* the Society of Men, which by virtue of a Divine Covenant have Fellowſhip with the Father and Son, you did oblige your ſelves to the Laws by which this Society is govern'd; and ſubjected your ſelves to him who is the Head of it: You ſolemnly promiſed and vowed to renounce the Devil and all his VVorks, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked VVorld

World, and all the ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh, and to keep God's Holy Will and Commandments. And unleſs you will declare, that you promiſed deceitfully, you are not at liberty to chuſe the way you will walk in; for you have choſen your way already, and are bound by Engagements to ſerve the Lord. You may indeed renounce him, that you ſubjected your ſelves to, and go from the ways you have oblig'd your ſelves to walk in, as every wicked Chriſtian does: But you cannot do this without being falſe to your Promiſe, and a breach of the moſt ſolemn Engagement that you can poſſibly be under. For as St. *Peter* ſaith, Baptiſm is the Anſwer of a good Conſcience to God, and is no otherwiſe ſaving than as we are ſincere in our Engagements, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. And therefore St. *Paul* ſaith, *We are buried with Chriſt by Baptiſm into death, that like as he was raiſed from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life*, Rom. 6. 4.

5. It is that alone which God in his revealed Will has preſcribed and eſtabliſhed. The Religion that he gave the *Jews* by *Moſes*, and eſpecially that which he has inſtituted by his Son, to prefer works of Piety and Holineſs before thouſands of Rams, and ten Thouſands of Rivers of Oil. *He hath ſhewed thee O Man what is good, i. e.* by Revealing his Will unto thee; *And what does the Lord thy God require of thee but to do Juſtice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*, ſaith the Prophet *Micah* to his ancient People the *Jews*, altho' their Religion was by God himſelf made to conſiſt much in External Obſervances, *Chap.* 6. 8. And in the New Teſtament St. *Paul* tells us, *That the Grace of God which brings Salvation, has appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly in this preſent evil world*. Tit. 2. 11, 12. And if you read the Scriptures with care, you may obſerve quite through them, that there is nothing he ſets ſo much value upon, as a Pious and Holy Life. Here it is that he calls upon all Men to *Repent, and amend their doings, that iniquity may not be their ruin; to turn to the Lord their God, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, that they

may find Mercy with God; to *cease to do evil*, and to *learn to do well*, to *put off* concerning our former Conversation *the Old Man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful Lusts*, and to *put on the New Man*, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness. This is the Religion which the Gospel teaches, and which it assures us, there is no Salvation without

Having now offer'd you some Considerations to perswade you to a sincere Regard to the *Practice of Religion* in general, I proceed to the second Section.

Sect. II. To perswade you constantly to frequent the Assemblies for publick Worship; and that not only on the *Lord's Day*, when you Rest from your Labour; but at other times, as oft as you have an Opportunity, if you be not otherwise hindred by any business of pressing necessity. But I beseech you, do not pretend the urgency of your Affairs, to excuse you wholly from this Duty on Holy Days, or other times in the Week. For give me leave to tell you my Thoughts freely, that if you never do this, it looks a little suspiciously that something else than Business is the cause of it. Your way of Life may be toilsom and Laborious, and for that Reason I will grant you, that God expects less from you than from those that have more leisure: But when I say he expects less, do not think that your multitude of business will excuse you, if you pay him no Service at all. For it is easie to be observed, that there are none of you so busy, but you can find time to spend ill. And is it fit that you, who sometimes in the very throng of your Business, can spare an Hour to treat your Friend in an Alehouse, should tell the World, you have no leisure at all to Assemble with your Brethren in the House of God? No, assure your selves, this will not excuse you; for though he expects less from you on the account of your way of Life, yet he looks for more than any Friend ought to claim. For,

1. Remember that you are under great Obligations to do this.

2. It is highly Just and Reasonable you should.

3. It is highly necessary on your own Account.

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1. Remember that you are under great Obligation to do this both as you are his Creatures, and live upon his Providence. If you think your Lives and Beings to be worth an acknowledgment, to whom ſhould you make your acknowledgments, but to him that made you? And if it be a Matter of any Conſideration with you, that you are daily ſupplied with Food, and the other Conveniencies of Life; that you are preſerved from innumerable Evils, and thoſe too, many times ſuch as you did not foreſee, and if you had, were out of your Power to prevent; and that you ſee a good Event of your Counſels, and eat the Labour of your Hands; Are you not bound to look up to him who opens his Hand and fills you with your Plenteouſneſs? Who neither Slumbers nor Sleeps, but VVatches over you, when you can no longer watch for your ſelves?

But if you think for theſe and the like Bleſſings, as they reſpect your ſelves alone, you can in private make your acknowledgments. I grant you are bound to do ſo; but yet not to excuſe you from your publick Duty. For, Holy *David* makes this a Reaſon why we ought to come into his preſence with Thanksgiving, *O come let us worſhip, and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is our God, and we are the People of his Paſture.* Pſ. 95. 2, 6, 7. And accordingly it was his own Practice for thoſe particular Favours, that God bleſſed him with: *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits toward me? I will pay my Vows in the preſence of the People,* Pſ. 110. 12, 14. So, becauſe God is ſo Good, as to ſuccour and relieve the Afflicted, he declared, that his Praiſe ſhould be of him in the great Congregation, *Pſ.* 22. 24, 25. But beſides, haſt thou not innumerable publick Bleſſings that thou oughteſt to be thankful for? Doſt thou not enjoy the ſame Peace and Plenty, and ſhare in the ſame Deliverances, and reap the ſame Benefit from the fruitful Seaſons, that he gives, as the reſt of thy Neighbours do? And is it not meet, that thou ſhouldſt aſſemble with them, to Bleſs and Praiſe the Lord for the Bleſſings that thou receiveſt in common with them? And,

2. It is highly Juſt and Reaſonable, that you ſhould thus ſerve the Lord, For,

1. If it be reaſonable to Honour and Praiſe, to Reverence and Adore him at all, it is but juſt that we ſhould give him as much Honour, as is in our Power. Now it is certain that the more publickly we Honour him, the greater is our Honour; for he who publiſhes his Reverence and Eſteem, and lets the VVorld ſee, that he accounts him worthy to receive all Glory and Praiſe; does Honour him at a higher rate, than he who only thinks honourably of him, or worſhips him in private.

His tranſcendent Excellency, and the Perfections of his Nature are good Reaſons, why all the World ſhould bow themſelves before him; and are the Reaſon, why the Angels in Heaven do fall down before his Throne. And is there any Reaſon, why Man, who is but Duſt and Aſhes, ſhould not do what the Angels do? VVhy ſhould you be exempt from a Duty, that they perform with the greateſt Chearfulneſs? Are you too high to Reverence him, who is adored of perfect Spirits? Is it too much for ſuch as you to own the infinite Perfections, and to proclaim the Excellencies of God, when this is the conſtant Employment of Beings ſo much above you, and who ſtand in leſs need of the Goodneſs of God than you, having fewer Infirmities, and none of that Vanity and Sinfulneſs, that belong to your Nature?

VVould you conſider, what he is in himſelf, and what he is to you, you would ſtand aſtoniſhed at his Majeſty and Greatneſs, his Almighty Power and infinite Goodneſs; and yet while you neglect his Publick Worſhip, you behave your ſelves towards him, *as if you were aſhamed to own him before Men.*

2. It is but juſt, that you ſhould do, what in you lies that others may honour him, as well as you. If you do not this, you are wanting in a Duty that Juſtice obliges you to; for ſo much Honour as he wants through our neglect of him, you detract from him: Upon this Reaſon you are bound to publiſh his Praiſe, and ſpeak good of his Name, that you may propagate your eſteem

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of him, and others may learn of your Example to think and speak as Honourably of him, as you do. *Let your Light*, saith our Saviour, *so shine before Men, that they seeing your good Works may Glorify your Father, which is in Heaven*, Mat. 5. 16. And as oft as you neglect to do this, you seem to grudge him that universal Esteem and Reverence that he ought to have in the World. Did your Children shew you no respect in Publick, you would not think their private Respects a sufficient discharge of their Duty; or that that Son did what he could to recommend you to the Reverence of the rest of his Brethren, who never paid you any before them.

3. It is necessary for your selves. For, if the Providence of God be needful to you, for Success in your Labours, supplying your Wants and the preservation also of you from Dangers; is it not necessary, that you should be in his Favour, and by all the Ways imaginable to secure his Friendship? Ought not your own discretion in this case to teach you with all Prayer and Supplications, *i. e.* Publick as well as private, to make your Requests known unto him, without whose Blessing all your Labour is in vain! Surely you cannot think, that you can be at too much pains to procure a Blessing from the Lord, when nothing you do can succeed well without it.

I may add besides, that you are Members of Christ's Church, *i. e.* incorporated into that Society, which is united together for this Employment. And accordingly it is frequently said of the first Converts to Christianity, *that they were all with one accord in one place*, Acts, 2. 1. *That they continued with one accord in Prayer and Supplication*, Chap. 1. 14. *That they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship*, Chap. 2. 42. *That all that believed were together*, in all which, and sundry such like Scriptures, is plainly meant, that they constantly frequented the publick Christian Assemblies for Divine Worship.

Now it is in these publick Assemblies that God supplies the Spiritual Wants of his Family. It is to us, as we are the Members of Christ's Body, that the Aids and Suc-

Succours of his Spirit do belong; and the Communications thereof are then chiefly to be expected, when we are together with one accord in one place: For it is only in theſe Holy and Religious Aſſemblies, that our Relation to Chriſt is viſible. And how can you expect to ſhare in theſe Communications, if you abſtain from theſe Aſſemblies; for then you are not where Chriſt is, for he only is, where his Body is.

You have often told me, you can read good Books, and pray at home; whether you do this or no, I know not. But allowing it to be true, that you do thus ſpend your time, I would ask you to what end it is you Read? Is it to inform you in your Duty? This ought to be the end of your Reading. And if you do Read to this End, how comes it to paſs that your Conſciences within you do not ſtartle, and tell you, that you are not where you ought to be, as oft as you read ſuch Texts as theſe, *the Lord loveth the Gates of Sion*, i. e. The place of his publick Worſhip, *more than all the dwellings of Jacob*, Pſ. 87. 2. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, and that I will ſeek after, that I may dwell in the Houſe of the Lord all the Days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple*, Pſ. 27. 4. *How amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of Hoſts; my Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my heart and my fleſh crieth out for the Living God. Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy Houſe, they will be ſtill praiſing thee*, Pſ. 84. 1, 2, 4. And when thou readeſt of the firſt Chriſtians, that they were together in one place, and that they continued daily with one accord in the Temple. VVhen I ſay thou readeſt theſe and the like Places, methinks it ſhould make thee aſhamed to think how unlike to the Practice of Holy Men, both under the Old and New Teſtament, thine is.

Do not think that I diſcourage Private Prayer; no, that is a neceſſary Duty, which I ſhall hereafter exhort you to. But that which I dehort you from, is the making your private Devotions an excuſe for your neglect of your publick Duty. I muſt needs ſay, that I much queſtion, whether you, who do not go to Church

are thus Devout at Home; and in that caſe you expoſe your ſelves to double Vengeance for neglecting your Publick Duty, and trying to bring your ſelves off by a Lye. But if the Caſe be as you ſay, do you think thus to compound it with God? Are your own Private Prayers of ſuch a value, that for the ſake of them, he will allow you in the neglect of that part of his VVorſhip, which is certainly more for his Honour?

And now if you be under ſuch Obligations to attend upon the Publick VVorſhip of God, and there be ſuch a neceſſity upon you as your own Good for the doing it; if the ſupporting Religion here, and the diſpoſing you for the Eternal Halelujahs of Angels hereafter require it, for God's ſake how comes it to paſs, that this is a Duty you pay ſo little regard to? How can you with any ſatisfaction in your ſelves ſpend the time that you ſhould be ſerving God in his Houſe of Prayer, either in walking abroad, or ſitting, and perhaps ſleeping at home! Methinks every time you hear the Bells calling you to the Holy Aſſembly of God's People, your Conſciences within you ſhould upbraid you with your Neglects, and make your Houſes too uneaſie to abide in. I am ſure your Houſes cannot hold you, let the VVeather Seaſon be what it will, if a profitable bargain calls you abroad; and ſhall Religion, upon which your everlaſting welfare depends, be the only thing that cannot move you? Ah careleſs Wretches! Do God and Religion deſerve ſo little from you? And is it nothing to you, that you do that, which tends to bring them out of Repute, and to perſuade the World, that all their greateſt Concernments lie here below.

Awake, Awake you careleſs Souls, and remember that you have more than your Bodies to provide for, and a poor Mortal Life to take care of; that the Affairs and Concernments of this Life, are the leaſt part of your Buſineſs; and that however you may advance your ſelves thereby to a comfortable, nay, a ſplendid Condition in this Life; yet you have provided for no more than a Life, that you muſt loſe; and that nothing

thing you now gain by all your Labour, will profit you beyond the Grave, without Religion. Oh! VVould you think of this, How would it ſhame you, How would it ſtartle you, and make you afraid to think that you are only careleſs in that Affair, which requires your greateſt Diligence. Remember this, you that forget God. And if you would remember it, I am very confident you would at leaſt ſpend that one Day of the Seven in Holy Duties, and eſpecially in the Publick Exerciſes of Religion, which is upon great Reaſon ſet apart for that purpoſe. Then would you ſay with *David*, *I will Praiſe the Lord with my whole Heart in the Aſſembly of the Upright, and in the Congregation*; and then would you ſtir up others, ſaying, *Come let us go to the Mountain of the Lord, to the Houſe of the God of* Jacob, *and he will teach us his ways.*

Sect. III. The next thing I perſuade you to is a Pious regard to the Holy Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood, that you would conſider it as a Holy Feaſt of God's preparing, and believe your ſelves bound to receive it, as oft as you are invited. For,

1. Remember that it is inſtituted by Chriſt our Lord. By him, whom the Father ſent into the World to be a Teacher of Righteouſneſs, and whom he has exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour; by him, into whom we are baptized, and whoſe Name we bear; to whom we have devoted our ſelves, and by a Solemn Engagement have ſubjected our ſelves to his Authority: He, I ſay, in the ſame Night, that he was betrayed, took Bread, and when he had given Thanks he brake it, and ſaid, *Take, Eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you; Do this in Remembrance of me.* And after the ſame manner he took the Cup, when he had Supped, ſaying, *This Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood; This do ye, as oft as ye Drink, in Remembrance of me,* 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25. So that if the Authority of our Lord do any thing with us; or if our own Solemn Vows and Engagements be of any conſideration with us, we are bound in Obedience to the Command of him, whom God has made our Lord, and whom we have received and ſubjected our ſelves to as ſuch, to receive this Holy Sa-

Sacrament, as oft as we have an Opportunity. And are you, who call our ſelves Chriſtians, *i. e.* Perſons engaged by Vow and Promiſe to obey the Commands, and obſerve the Rules of Chriſt's Holy Religion, be guilty of ſo Notorious a Contempt of your Lord's Authority, as the conſtant neglect of this Holy Inſtitution amounts to? Has he ſaid, *do this in Remembrance of me*, and dare you turn your Backs upon his Table, when you are to do this? Do you Honour him as your Lord, or pay a Reſpect to his Authority? Do you fear him as your Judge, or dread the Power he hath received from his Father, when in any Matter you declare he ſhall not Rule over you? I hardly think indeed you intend any thing of this Nature, when you turn your Back upon his Table; but ſo rude a behaviour will no doubt have no milder a conſtruction put upon it, when our Lord ſhall upbraid you, ſaying, *Why called you me Lord, and would not do the things that I ſaid.*

2. Remember that it was inſtituted to be a Memorial of his Death and Paſſion. For it was inſtituted by him, who not only is our Lord, but our Redeemer; by him, who has loved us, and laid down his Life for us; who was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our Iniquities; who for our Sakes underwent the greateſt contradiction of Sinners, and ſuffer'd the moſt ſhameful Death upon the Croſs. Here then you are invited to call to Mind the exceeding great Love of your Maſter, and only Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt* thus dying for you, and the innumerable Benefits which by his precious Blood-ſhedding he has obtained for you. Here you are to commemorate your own deliverance from Death and Hell, by the Death of your Redeemer; the Blood that the Conqueſt of your Enemies coſt, and the dangerous State you were in, when nothing leſs than the Death of the Son of God could ſave you. As oft as you are called to this Table, it is to awaken in you a grateful Senſe of your Redeemer's Love, and to furniſh you with an Opportunity to make your Acknowledgments for the higheſt Inſtances of Love, that any of God's Creatures were ever favour'd with. *Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* He requires you would

bear

bear a grateful Senſe of ſo inеſtimable a Bleſſing in your Minds, and by a ſolemn act of Religion expreſs your Gratitude. And is it not Meet, Right, and your bounden Duty, that you ſhould at all times, and in all places, and by all manner of ways be thankful to God for ſo great Love, and celebrate the Praiſes of your Redeemer, who valued not his Life to ſave you from Deſtruction? Surely, as *Naaman*'s Servants ſaid to their Maſter, if he who has done ſo much for you, *had bid you do ſome great thing*, Gratitude and Ingenuity ſhould at leaſt have prompted you to attempt, and cheerfully to do it, notwithſtanding all Difficulties, if you found it Practicable. How much more when he only ſaith, *Do this, celebrate a Feaſt in Remembrance of me and my Love?* Can you think this too much to be done for your Lord, who thought nothing he could do too much for you? Surely you, who cringe for every petty Favour, and are loud in the Praiſes of a Man who does you ſome little Good, Surely I ſay, you cannot be ſo diſingenuous to him, who has ſaved your Lives from Deſtruction, as to think a Mercy of this Nature not worth commemorating.

But you will ſay, as too many have done, that you are unworthy, and that 'tis dangerous for ſuch as you to receive; for he that Eateth and Drinketh unworthily, Eateth and Drinketh Damnation to himſelf. Now that this is a Text very much miſtaken, you will I doubt not, grant, when I have put theſe Queſtions to you.

1. Whether it was St. *Paul*'s Deſign to affright you from the Communion? This you muſt believe, if you believe the Danger of Receiving unworthily is ſuch that it is much ſafer not to receive at all, than to receive. But thus you ought not to believe of an Apoſtle, who tells you that he received the Doctrine of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord, as a part of the Chriſtian Religion?

2. Whether we are to receive no Bleſſing from God which we are unworthy of. This ſeems to be the meaning of this Scruple; for if you dare not receive the Communion, becauſe you are unworthy, muſt you not refuſe every Bleſſing, but ſuch as you are worthy of?

A

And what a miſerable Condition ſhould we Unworthy Creatures be then in? If you drive this Principle up to the height, you muſt no more Eat the Bread that ſupports your Bodies, than this, which is Myſtically the Body of Chriſt.

3. VVhether we ought not to be thankful for thoſe Bleſſings, that God gives us, notwithſtanding our Unworthineſs to receive them? I am apt to think, that every reaſonable Man will believe that he ought to be abundantly more thankful for Bleſſings of this Nature, than if they were ſuch, as he was worthy to receive, becauſe ſuch Bleſſings do carry more of his goodneſs in them than otherwiſe they would do. Now this is the very Caſe before us; God ſent his Son into the VVorld to deliver us out of the Hands of our Enemies; and the Son of God in memory of ſo great a Bleſſing, has commanded us to *Eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup.* To do which you profeſs your ſelves Unworthy, *i. e.* You urge that as a reaſon for your Unthankfulneſs, upon the account of which you ought to be the moſt Thankful. But it is dangerous to receive Unworthily. *True*, it is ſo; ; But,

1. Is there no danger in not receiving? Can you break the Commands of your Lord, and yet be Guiltleſs?

2. Is there no Poſſibility to receive ſo worthily as to be accepted by God? If there be not, you muſt believe that our Lord has inſtituted this Sacrament for our hurt; for in this caſe there is no avoiding Damnation, whether we receive it or not; but if we receive, we muſt be damn'd for receiving Unworthily; and if we do not receive, we muſt be condemn'd for not obeying our Lord's Command. But if there be, as 'tis certain there is, you take a wrong courſe to avoid the Condemnation that belongs to unworthy Receivers by not receiving at all.

3. I ask you what kind of Unworthineſs it is you ſpeak of? It is either that which ariſeth from our Make and Nature, or ſuch as iſſues from a bad Life, or any notorious ſinful Action: If it be the former, your Unworthineſs is no more than what belongs to all Men; which to be ſure cannot be the Unworthineſs St. *Paul* ſpeaks

ſpeaks of, becauſe none then could be Worthy; and yet our Lord did certainly know we might receive it to our Comfort, when he inſtituted it.

But if you be unworthy, becauſe of any ſcandalous notorious Sin, why do you not repent and amend your Doings? This kind of Unworthineſs is not a Reaſon, why you ſhould not receive, but is a very preſſing Reaſon, why you ſhould Reform your Lives; becauſe whether you Eat this Bread and Drink this Cup unworthily or no, you are in danger of Damnation. So that if Damnation be the thing you are afraid of, you do not avoid it by not Eating and Drinking You avoid being Condemn'd indeed, for Eating and Drinking unworthily, but you have no way to avoid being condemn'd for thoſe Sins, that make you unworthy, but by a ſincere Repentance. If you do not this, it will grievouſly aggravate your Guilt, that you have neglected this great Duty of Receiving the Sacrament, leſt you ſhould find your ſelves under an obligation to *abandon* thoſe Sins that render you unworthy. And now my Brethren by the Mercies of God I exhort you to think of theſe things, and then I am ſure that you will wonder how any who profeſſeth himſelf a Chriſtian, can turn his Back upon this Sacrament.

VVhile the Senſe of our Redeemer's Love was quick and moving, and Mens Affections towards him were warm, they received the Communion daily. And oh! Are you not aſhamed to bear the ſame Name as they did? and yet to be ſo unlike them in Practice? You are as much obliged by the Death of Chriſt, as they were? You have as much to be Thankful for as they had. And oh whence is it, that you do not do this now? How will it make you hang your Heads for ſhame, when you ſhall hear him who was pierced for you, upbraiding you with your diſingenuity, ſaying, *behold, ungrateful Men! the Prints of theſe wounds I received when I combated with Death and Hell for your ſakes; See the Marks of your Redemption in my Hands and Sides, and be aſhamed of the Senſeleſs Stupidity, with which you have heard the Story of my Paſſion.* VVill it not abaſh and ſtartle you to hear that, which you think no-

thing

thing of now, charged with ſeverity on you, as a great Contempt of your Redeemer? Certainly it will, and ſo much the more as it will come by ſurprize upon you, unleſs it pleaſe God, that your Eyes be opened now to ſee the Faults and Folly of the Neglect, which as yet you have been groſly inſenſible of. I now proceed.

§. IV. To perſwade you to a Religious Obſervance of the Lord's Day. I am verily perſwaded that the Neglect of this has contributed as much as any one thing to that great decay of Religion, that is among us. For when Men wander careleſly abroad, as Perſons that want Employment for their time, they do as it were invite the Devil to ſet them on work; and when inſtead of the Church they run to Alehouſes, as too many do, they go to the Tents of VVickedneſs, and even make a ſurrender of themſelves in his own Territories. You are not in half ſo much danger on other Days to fall into Temptation, for then your Buſineſs and Labour are in a great meaſure your Security; but your greateſt danger is, when the Devil doth find you at leiſure to do his VVork. Oh then! As you love your Souls, take heed, how you idle away that Day, in which you are Commanded to reſt from your Labour. But let it be your Care and Reſolution to ſpend it to thoſe Ends and Purpoſes, that God has appointed it. Do not think that he has conſulted the eaſe of your Bodies, much leſs that he has given you a Day of Liberty for the doing of Evil without reſtraint, by making it a day of Reſt; but that you may be at Liberty to attend upon Religious Duties, and to make a better Proviſion for the everlaſting welfare of your Souls, than you can be ſuppoſed to be in a poſſibility of doing in thoſe days, that you devote to your own Labour, and the Service of your Bodies. And,

1. Let it be your Care in the Morning as ſoon as you awake, to rid your Minds of all wordly Cares and Solicitudes. For you cannot be ſaid to keep it a Day of Reſt, ſo long as you Drudge and Labour your Minds in thoſe VVordly Affairs, which you think it not decent to be found doing on this Day.

2. Let it be your Care by Prayer and Meditation, by Reading, and other Pious and Holy Exerciſes, to put your

your own, and the Minds of thoſe under your Care into a Religious Frame. This you ought to do, that you may be in a Capacity to receive Benefit by the Publick Services of Religion. And if the Holy Duties of this Day have no good Reliſh with you, it is becauſe your Souls are not put into a pious Frame before-hand. If you be wanting in this part of your Duty it is no more poſſible you ſhould be glad, as *David* ſaid he was, when he was invited to go to the Houſe of the Lord, than when you are called to a Feaſt, and have loſt your Appetite.

3. Let it be your Care to attend duly to the Exerciſes of Religion in the publick Worſhip of God. This I have already endeavour'd to perſwade you to, by ſhewing what Obligation you are under thereto, and the neceſſity of it. All that I ſhall add is, That you would be early at the Church at the beginning of the Prayers, and not think that you have done your Duty there, when perhaps you have done it by the halves; And that you be careful to take your Children and Servants along with you, becauſe you are accountable to God for them as well as your ſelves.

4. Let the end of your going thither be to bear a part in the Exerciſes of thoſe Holy Aſſemblies, and not out of a bare Compliance with the Cuſtom of the place where you live, or Curioſity. Let it be to join in the Prayers and Praiſes, that are there offer'd unto God, and from the Scriptures and the Mouth of his Miniſters to be inſtructed in the Doctrine of Salvation, and the way of Life by which you muſt Save your Souls. And

Laſtly, when you return home, ſpend the remainder of the Day in your own Family in exerciſes of Piety and Devotion. Do not think that you have ſufficiently perform'd your Duty: or done all that the Sacredneſs of the Day calls for, by going to Church; and that when the Publick Service is over, you may devote the remainder to your Secular Cares and Concernments, or trifle it away to no good purpoſe; but let it be your Care to improve it to your own advantage, and the benefit of thoſe under your Care, who generally, your Servants I mean, have little leiſure to think of things of this Nature, but on this Day. And now, that I may

the more effectually prevail with you thus to keep this Day unto the Lord.

1. Let me put you in mind, that it is highly reasonable some time should be set apart for Exercises of this Nature. If you believe there is a God, and another Life, and that you have immortal Souls to take care of, you do not think surely, that God, and your Souls, and Eternity are to be wholly neglected; or that you act like Wise Men in labouring for your Bodies, and improving every moment of your time for your present advantage, and allowing none to provide for a Life, that is endless, and to save your Immortal Souls. That you should only have time to serve your selves, and none to think of your God; nay, to care only for that part of you, which is Earthly, and of kin to the Beasts, and none to employ in the Concerns of your Souls, which are indeed your selves.

Further, think with your selves, whether it be reasonable that Religion should be lost, that that on which your everlasting Welfare depends, should decay, and perish from among us? Would it be for your advantage to have no Faith nor Truth amongst Men, no God to keep the VVorld in awe, no means to provide that your Souls may be everlastingly happy, when you leave this VVorld? and yet this would be your miserable condition, if there was no time set apart for the discharging your Minds from VVordly Cares, and employing them in Religious Services; as you may observe from the rudeness of those among you, who pay no Respect at all to the *Lord's Day*.

2. It is but just, that you should Religiously observe that Day, which is set apart for Holy Exercises. *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy*, saith God, in the fourth Commandment. And besides the Reverence that is due to his Authority, Justice does require that you should render unto God that part of your time, that he claims for his own Use and Service; because he has been so bountiful to you, as to allow you so considerably more for your selves. So that when you trifle away or mispend this Day, when you devote it to your Sloth, or to any Affair of your own, you are highly

ly Unjuſt, and Guilty of a notorious Robbery. You lay hands on that which is none of your own; and that which makes your Crime the more baſe and deteſtable, is, that you rob your greateſt and beſt Benefactor; and invade the Right and Poſſeſſion of him, who has dealt very bountifully with you. And will you rob God? Him that has deſerved more from you than you can poſſibly give? And whom you cannot ſufficiently Admire and adore, was it poſſible for you to conſecrate all your Time to his Service, and glorifie him as inceſſantly as the Angels do? Be exhorted then to ſtudy your own Intereſts more, by minding the things that are God's; and ſince he has ſet apart a day for his own Service, take heed how you miſpend or prophane it, by uſing it otherwiſe than in ſerving him, to whom it belongs. Do to God, as you your ſelves would be done to. And if you approve not of the Villany of thoſe, who are not content with their own portion of Goods, that God has given them, but live upon the Spoil and Plunder of others, approve not of it in your ſelves by ſtealing from God that day, which he commands you to ſpend Religiouſly.

§. V. The laſt thing I ſhall perſuade you to, that are careleſs, is the Practice of Family Duties. Such as Praying in and with your Families Night and Morning, Reading the Holy Scriptures and other good Books, and Catechiſing and Inſtructing your Children and Servants in the neceſſary Duties and Principles of Religion. VVould you but thus reſtore Religion in your Families, you would certainly recover its Reputation in the VVorld, and in a ſhort time baniſh all that Atheiſm and Profaneneſs, that to the ſhame of our Profeſſion dare with ſo much Impudence lift up their Heads among us.

1. Let it be your conſtant Practice Night and Morning to make your Prayers unto God. This has been the Practice of all Holy Men, who according as they have had Leiſure, have daily more or leſs performed this Duty, both in their Cloſets, and with their Families. *Seven times a Day* did Holy *David* praiſe God, *Pſ.* 119. 164. *Daniel*'s cuſtom was to retire to his Houſe from the publick Affairs, that were upon his Hands, *Three times a Day* to Pray and give Thanks before God, *Chap.* 6. 10.

And

And St. *Paul's* Exhortation is to *continue constant in Prayer, to pray without ceasing*; to *Pray always with all Prayer and Supplication, and in every thing by Prayer to make our Requests known unto God.* 'Tis true, it is not possible that all Men should be bound up by the same Rules, because Men's Circumstances and Condition of Life are not the same; but yet there is no Man, but may allow himself more time than usually he does for this Divine Employment. You may make it the first and the last Business you do, *i. e.* Before you enter upon the Business of the Day, you may in your Closets, or Chambers, offer up your Morning Sacrifice unto the God that has preserved you the Night past, and whose Providence is so needful for you for the prospering your Handy-work, and the protecting your Person the Day following; and at Night, before you go to Bed, you may make your Acknowledgments to God for preserving you, and supplying your Wants the Day past, and humbly recommend your selves and Families to the Protection of this good Providence the Night following. This, I say, both you and every particular Person under your Roofs may do, in case your Condition of Life is such, that you cannot call them together at any set times in the Day for Prayer.

Nay you may, and ought to do more than this. Every time you sit down to your Meals, you have time enough to lift up your Hearts to God, who is the giver of all good things, to acknowledge his Bounty and Goodness in supplying your present Wants, and begging a Blessing upon the Food provided for you; and to return him thanks for the Refreshment you have by it. This is a piece of Religion that is almost quite laid aside, and I doubt few of you, when you go to your Meals, consider that your Meat and Drink are Blessings from the Lord; few of you I am afraid, ever think of him, who satisfies your Mouths with good things, and fills you with his Plenteousness, but sit down to your Tables, as the Swine goes to his Trough, without ever looking up to him that furnishes it. Oh methinks, whatever you are at other times, you should be Religious, when your Eyes do put you in mind of his Goodness, and to be sure to Glorify him when you

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Eat and Drink, how little ſoever you think of him elſe.

But once more let me put you in Mind, that you can never be ſo full of Buſineſs, but you may even in the midſt of it offer up pious and devout Thoughts unto God, and in ſhort Ejaculations bleſs his Name, and Praiſe him for all his VVorks of Mercy. This you may do without hindring your Buſineſs; and was God as much in your Thoughts as he ought, you would find time enough at any Hour in the Day for it, and Objects enough in every Place to furniſh you with Matter for it.

If you have felt no Inconvenience hitherto from your forgetfulneſs of him, you have the more reaſon to fall on your Knees with all ſpeed, to bleſs him for being good to you, contrary to what you have deſerved: But take heed after this Admonition, of Neglecting your Duty to him any longer leſt he take away from you, the whole ſtay of Bread, and the whole ſtay of VVater, and by ſo ſevere a Judgment, make you know, that the ſupplying your VVants, is more owing to his Bounty and Goodneſs, than to your Labour and Forecaſt.

2. The next Family-Duty I would recommend to you, is reading the Holy Scriptures, and other good Books. This I recommend to thoſe of you that can Read; and for ſuch as cannot, If this Duty was religiouſly put in practice, they could not want Opportunities to hear them as oft as they pleaſed from others. Thus did God require his People to ſpend their ſpare Hours, and thus have good Men employed themſelves, as oft as their other Affairs would give them leave. So it is ſaid of *Ezra*, That *he ſet his Heart to ſeek the Law of the Lord*, Ch. 7. 10. *David* frequently declares the great Pleaſure and Satisfaction he took in this Duty. That *he delighted in God's Law*, Pſ. 119. 70. That *the Law of God's Mouth was better unto him than thouſands of Gold and Silver*, v. 72. That *he loved his Law, and made it his Meditation all the Day*, v. 97. That *his Words were ſweet to his Taſte, yea ſweeter than Honey to his Mouth*, v. 103. That *it was a Lamp unto his Feet, and a Light unto his Path*, v. 105. He ſtiles them *Bleſſed, whom the Lord teacheth out of his Law*, Pſ. 94. 12.. And the VViſe Man calls them *Fools, that hate Knowledge*, Prov. 1. 22.

And

And had Religion the ſame Power over you, as it
ad over theſe, and other Holy Men, notwithſtanding
he round of Labour that your Condition obliges you
o, you would find ſome time for an exerciſe of this
ature. It is obſervable, that none of you are ſo full
f Buſineſs, but you can find ſome time to ſpend looſe-
, and extravagantly, ſome in Acts of Civility and
riendſhip, and too much in doing nothing at all, or
erhaps in that which is next to nothing, *viz.* in idle
orts and Paſtimes, or in unprofitable Chat with your
eighbour, or your Families: and have you none
r the improving your Minds? Have you time to do
, Time for any thing that is of no great Moment
you; and are you too full of Buſineſs to ſtudy the
hings that make for your everlaſting Happineſs? Ah!
ere you but well Affected toward Religion, you
ould find time enough, at leaſt every Evening, when
our Days Labour is over, for this, as well as other
atters, and your Bible, or ſome other good Book,
ould be in your Hand at thoſe times, when you ſit,
d ſpeak againſt your Brother and your Neighbour.
d if this Exhortation prevail with you, let me give
u this Advice for the making your Reading profita-
e to you; be careful to obſerve what you Read what
octrines, or Rules of Life, What Promiſes or Threats
u meet with; I do not ſuppoſe you capable of un-
rſtanding every thing you read; nor is it neceſſary
u ſhould, but yet you may get more Underſtanding,
d true Wiſdom by your Reading, than generally you
. For too many, I am afraid, Read only for Read-
ſake; and believe they have employed their Time
ll, when they have read a Chapter in the Bible,
ough when they have done, they are not one jot the
er. And others there are, that Read for ſome Opini-
s ſake, and not to mak themſelves Wiſe to Salvation;
ean to find out, if poſſible, ſome Texts for the ſup-
rting the Notions of a Party, that they have ſome
ticular Fancy for. Now theſe Read to an ill end,
the former to none at all: But let the end of your
ading be the ſame as God's was in the giving us the
ly Scripture; That as St. *Paul* ſaith, *The Man of*

God may be perfect, throughly furnish'd to every good work. 2 Tim. 3. 17. To this purpose it would be of great use to you, if you could make a collection of the Doctrins or Duties, especially those, that concern yourselves, that occur to you in your Reading. And would you be careful in this matter, you would do your selves as well as God, and Religion, good Service. For the Holy Scriptures are the Oracles of God, and contain the words of Life; and by reading them, and other good Books, you may improve your selves in Spiritual Wisdom, and Knowledge; which use of your time will turn to your best Account at the Day of Judgment. Then you will Bless God for the Advice that is now given you, when you shall see others, that despising Knowledge, and all the means of it, as much scorn'd and laugh'd at for their Ignorance and Folly; and perceive how much time you have saved which others have foolishly and irrecoverably lost. By this means you will prevent a great many Sins, which others, that have their Time lying upon their Hands, do for want of easing themselves of their burden, run into: And lastly, by this means you will discover the heinousness of a great many Sins, which Custom and common Practice have divested of their Odiousness, and recommended as Harmless and Innocent.

Oh then! if you value Religion, or Love your Souls, or wish well to your selves, apply your selves to this Duty with all seriousness: Were you but as much aware of the Advantages of this Divine Knowledge, as you are of that, which capacitates you for a Wise Management of your Affairs, you would as much long for an opportunity to go to your Bible, as a hungry Man does for a Meal.

The last thing then which I earnestly exhort you to, is the necessary thing of Catechising, and Instructing your Children, and Servants in the Principles and Duties of Religion. In those things I mean, which are necessary to be known, and practised in order to Eternal Life. Teach them, what they are to know and believe concerning God and Jesus Christ, and what they are to do, that they may be saved; and for this

know-

knowledge of any thing elſe, let it be recommended with never ſo much Zeal, it will profit them nothing. St *Paul* has told you, *that he, that comes to God muſt believe, that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them, that diligently ſeek him.* And our bleſſed Lord has informed you, *That if you believe in God, you muſt believe alſo in him, becauſe he that believeth in the Son, has Everlaſting Life; but he that believeth not, ſhall not ſee Life*; on which Reaſon you ought to inculcate theſe things upon the Minds of thoſe, that are under your Charge, and endeavour to Plant in them becoming Notions of God, and Jeſus Chriſt; to give them that Character of God, as is apt to excite in them a Love of his Goodneſs, and a Dread of his Majeſty, and to teach them thoſe things concerning the Dignity, and Excellency of the Son of God, and the deſign of his coming into the World, as will be apt to engage them in a dependance on him for the Salvation of their Souls. And for as much as without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord, as St. *Paul* informs us, *your great care muſt be to train them in the Practice of Virtue, and to inſtill into their minds thoſe Rules of Holineſs, by which they are to direct their Lives,*

This is a Duty, God knows that is generally neglected, although no one Duty is of more abſolute neceſſity or of more laſting influence, nor more frequently preſs'd, and inculcated upon us in the Holy Scriptures, than this is. It is without doubt owing to the neglect of this, that Peoples Minds are ſo much wean'd from Religion; and it is certain, that the due performance of this would in a little time ſo open Mens Eyes, that Irreligion and Atheiſm would be forced to forgo the Conqueſts they have made. There is nothing would contribute more to the reſtoring Religion to its juſt Authority over Mens Minds and Conſciences, for it needs nothing more than to be known to make it univerſally eſteemed. For which Reaſon it is, that God took care under the Old Teſtament, to oblige the Jews to a faithful diſcharge of this Duty, and under the New Teſtament has enjoyn'd it upon Parents, as a Principal part of the Truſt, he repoſes in them. *Theſe words*

which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thine Heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and ſhalt talk of them, when thou ſitteſt in thine Houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the Way, and when thou lyeſt down, and when thou riſeſt up, Deut. 6. 6, 7. *Take heed to thy ſelf, and keep thy Soul diligently, leſt thou forget the things which thine Eyes have ſeen, and leſt they depart from thine Heart all the days of thy Life, but teach them to thy Sons, and thy Sons Sons,* Ch. 4. 9. *Train up a Child* ſaith the Wiſe Man, *in the way he ſhould go, and when he is Old he will not depart from it,* Prov. 22. 6. And accordingly, he tells us, it was the care of his Parents to inſtruct him in the Principles of Wiſdom: *I was my Father's Son, tender and only Beloved in the ſight of my Mother; he taught me alſo, and ſaid unto me, Let thine Heart retain my Words, keep my Commandments, and Live, Get Wiſdom, get Underſtanding,* &c. Prov. 3, 4, 5. And how much pains he took with his Son, the Book of *Proverbs* is a ſufficient Teſtimony. And in the New Teſtament Parents are ſtrictly required to *bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord,* Epheſ. 6. 4. And St. *Paul* ſpeaks of it, as a very great Happineſs to *Timothy*, that by the early Care of his Grandmother *Lois*, and his Mother *Eunice*, he was *from a Child made to know the Holy Scriptures,* 2 Tim. 3. 15.

And there is great Reaſon that you that are Parents ſhould by an early Education prepare your Children for the Service they owe to God; and you that are Maſters and Miſtreſſes, ſo carefully to inſtruct your Servants in the neceſſary Duties of Religion, that their having been parts of your Families, may be matter of Joy to them all their Life after; becauſe otherwiſe you do not make that proviſion for them, as you ought to do. St. *Paul* has obſerved, That he that provides not for thoſe of his own Houſe, is worſe than an Infidel; and you need no Arguments to perſuade you, that this is your Duty ſo far as the Body is concerned. For this is the End and Reaſon of all your Labour; 'tis that they may live that you are at ſo much pains, and that they may live without you when you are gone, that you provide your

Chil-

Children with Callings. Thus far the Natural Tenderneſs you bear them, does eaſily prompt you to to take care of them; and at laſt to avoid the Clamours of your Neighbourhood, you will be ſure that your Servants ſhall not want what is neceſſary for this Life. But have you ſatisfied your Bowels, when you have fed their Bodies, and taken care that they may live comfortably in this World? Is there no Life to be provided for but this? Or have they only Bodies to be Cloath'd and Fed? And do you leave them in as good a Condition, as is poſſible for you, if you leave them an Eſtate to live upon, or put them into a way to provide for themſelves? No, my Brethren, this is not to do half that Nature obliges you to do, and nothing of that which God and Religion do eſpecially require of you. You do well to provide Food and Raiment for your Childrens Bodies, but you don't avoid the charge of Infidelity, if you be careleſs of their Souls. For you have your ſelves much rather like Infidels, when you take no care to make them know God, but by your Negligence ſuffer their Souls to Periſh for want of Knowledge, than if you let their Bodies ſtarve for want of Bread. Surely Eternal Life is infinitely more than the beſt Proviſions you can make for them in this Life; and it is ſure, that it is much more your Duty to provide for the one than for the other for them. And Oh! Then if you muſt needs neglect one part of them, let it be that in which they will ſuffer the leaſt by your careleſneſs.

How the thoughts of this does move you now I know not, but if you have that tenderneſs for them as you pretend, it will be extreamly ſtinging to hear them curſing you in Hell, for ſuffering them to go to that place of Torment by your careleſneſs: To hear them upbraiding you with your Neglect of them, and charging all their Miſeries upon you, that thoſe Flames in which they burn, and thoſe Fiends that there torment them, are become their Portion, for want of timely notice from you of the Torments of that Place, and your Care to teach them the ways in which they ſhould have gone.

Having made this Addreſs to you that are Careleſs, let me in a few words give my Advice,

2. To you who more carefully attend upon the Exerciſes of Religion.

1. That you ſuffer not your ſelves to be diſcouraged by the Scoffs of the Profane. There are a ſort of Men, that you are in an eſpecial manner to beware of; for if you be ſincerely Pious, you muſt expect to be aſſaulted with them: For there are not two things at a greater diſtance, or are more irreconcilable, than Religion and Impiety, which mutually aim at the Deſtruction of each other. As oft as you do your Duty to God your Example upbraids them, and they have no other way to be revenged upon your way of Life, but by perſecuting it with ſcurrilous Reflections, and indecent Raileries. And if you be not prepar'd for, and firmly reſolv'd in ſpight of theſe things to continue Religious, their Taunts and Profane Mockeries will weary you out of your Piety. For your Devotion ſhall be ſtiled Hypocriſie, and you your ſelves branded for Cheats; ſo that if upon no other account, yet for the ſake of a little Eaſe, you will be tempted to pay as little regard to Religion, as they. Nay further, the Men of this Spirit will as little ſpare Religion as you; and when it is for the ſake of Religion that they purſue you with their Scoffs, it is not to be expected, that that, which they are ſpightful againſt you for, ſhou'd eſcape their ſcorn. No, either they will deride your Faith, as meer Cheat and Impoſture; and gravely tell you, that the God you ſo much talk of is nothing but a Scare-Crow, ſet up by the Fears of Men to affright Children and Fools with; or if they be not ſo deſperately wicked, as to ſay there is no God, they will endeavour to laugh you out of that dread of him, by telling you he is too high to be approached to by Mortals; ſo perfectly Glorious, that he needs none of our Prayers; and ſo tranſcendently happy, that it is a Folly to think that he ſhould have any Regard to Matters ſo much below him as what is done here on Earth: That it is below his Majeſty, and wou'd leſſen his Happineſs to mind either us or any thing we do.

so, and that therefore it is a vain Thing to serve him: That these are Truths, you your selves may be sensible of, if you would observe how all things happen alike to all Men, and that you your selves are not the better for your Religion. These are smart Onsets, and require a great deal of Courage and Resolution in you to withstand them. So that it behoves you to be well resolved beforehand; for there is nothing that is more apt to shake a Man's Mind, and make him willing to drop his Religion, than the Mockeries, and abusive Jests of the Prophane.

2. It behoves you to take heed that the Examples of the Careless do not corrupt you. There is nothing more spreading than Example, and a Man must be throughly persuaded of the ill Consequences of the neglect of Religion, e're he will with Resolution continue to serve the Lord, when he is on all hands tempted by the common practice of his Neighbour, to have a slight Opinion of it. For it is a difficult thing for a Man to swim against the Stream, and to oppose a prevailing Practice. 'Tis a difficulty that a few have Resolution enough to break through; for Singularity, though in that which is good, is so melancholy, and exposed a thing, that it requires a great deal of Courage in spight of all the Solicitations of Custom and Example to be good alone. But the more difficult it is, the more admirable will your Virtue be, if you continue stedfast and unmovable in your Resolutions to exercise your selves in the Duties of Piety, notwithstanding so powerful a discouragement.

And for the confirming you in this Resolution, let me put you in Mind, that how many soever there are that spend their time otherwise than you do, yet you have more that are with you than those that are against you. They are too many, God knows, that have lost their Sense of Religion, and live as if there were no God to be fear'd or serv'd; but have you not encouragement enough to go on in your way by the Example of the Holy Angels, who Day and Night Praise and Glorifie their Great Creator? If you find that Example has any Power over you, you have Millions of Glorious

Spirits, that join with you in the same Practice of Adoring your Maker, which methinks should confirm you more in your Resolution to live Religiously, than the bad Examples of the Negligent among you, can possibly do to shake it. Yet,

3. Let me persuade you to a Reverend performance of these Holy Duties. Remember it is God's House you go to, whenever you Assemble your selves for Publick Worship. And do not think it enough for you to be present in your Holy Assemblies, unless your Behaviour be such as becomes the Presence of your God, and discovers a venerable Opinon of his Greatness and Excellency. *Moses* was Commanded *to put off his Shoes when he was in the Presence of God*, Exod. 2. 5. which among the Jews and the Eastern Nations was as much a Token of Reverence, as putting off our Hats is among us. And if we consider the Reason of the Command, *for the Place where thou standest is Holy Ground*; it is a plain intimation, that it has been the practice of Mankind from the earliest Ages of the World, always to present themselves before God, or to come into those places which were Hallowed to his Service with the greatest visible Demonstrations of Lowliness and Fear. For if they had not been wont thus to go into Holy Places, *Moses* would not have known the force of this Reason. And accordingly *Solomon*'s Advice is, *To keep our feet when we go into the House of God*, Eccl. 5. 1. *i. e.* when we go to those Holy Places, where God is worshipped, and for that Reason is always supposed to be present. *Keep thy Foot*, i. e. See that thy behaviour be decent, thy Looks Composed and Grave, and thy Gesture expressive of the Devotion of thy Mind. Thus the Holy Men of Old, such as *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, *David* and *Solomon*, and the like, were wont to present themselves before God. The very behaviour of Turks and Infidels will rise up against thee, who go not into their Temples and Moschs, but with the greatest lowliness, and prostrate themselves when they say their Prayers.

You perhaps will say that the Worship God expects from you is that of the Heart, the Internal Reverence and

d Esteem of the Soul, and that the lowliest posture f the Body is of no value without this. 'Tis true; But t give me leave to tell you, that I fear this Saying has en put into your Mouths to an ill end; I am sure, to e great prejudice of Religion. For now they who ake most use of it, are such as have the least Sense of od and their Duty upon their Minds. These think to ercise their want of Devotion by a saying, that I am to think has done much to destroy it. And how pular soever it is, yet it is certain that they who first culcated it, do not think you ought to excuse your ves from kneeling at your Prayers, because they mselves make use of this posture in their Private votions. And is there not greater Reason that we uld approach God with Humility and Reverence in blick, where Men as well as Angels are witnesses our Behaviour, than when we Address to him in vate? If internal Devotion be enough without the ble Marks of our Esteem, 'tis certain there is far less d of these in Private than in Publick, and we may ch rather say our Prayers at home, without any ex-sions of Reverence in our Behaviour, than in the rch. So that I cannot but suspect that it is with gn that they who Pray kneeling in their own ilies, have taken Men off from it in their Publick votions.

ut however it be true, that it is the Temper of the God looks at, yet it is true, that he expects we ld Reverence him as Men, and not as the Angels *i. e.* as Creatures that have Bodies as well as Souls, not like Creatures that are pure Spirits. He has e our Bodies as well as our Souls, and if one Rea-why we must worship him be, because he is our er, we must worship him with the whole of us that s made. It is by laying his Word up in your ts, that it becomes the Seed of Grace and Life to ; but you will not for that Reason, I hope, argue st hearing it with your Ears? And besides, is it not use he is a Provident Father to us, that we are d to Reverence and Adore him; and is it not y unjust to refuse to Reverence with that part of

you

you, over which a conſiderable part of his Providence is exerciſed? He Feeds and Cloths your Bodies, and will you not ſuffer your Bodies to pay him the Tribute of Honour they owe him! Finally, that it is our hope that God will Glorifie our very Bodies, as well as Souls in another World; and therefore what Imaginable Reaſon can be aſſign'd why we ſhould not Glorify God with our Bodies as well as our Souls, while we are here?

4 Take heed of coming late into your Aſſemblies in this reſpect too many among you, who dare not be guilty of a total neglect of theſe Services, are very faulty; coming into the Church, when half, if not all the Prayers are over. This is not only a very great indecency in it ſelf, but it is a very great wrong, to your own Souls, and an injury to your Neighbours. For it is nothing to you to loſe the Benefit of ſo many Prayers, as are over before you come, or are they of no concern to you? Have you no need of Humbling yourſelves before God; no Sins to Confeſs and beg Pardon for no need of Mercy or Forgivneſs, that you come after the Confeſſion and Abſolution are over? Have you nothing to Bleſs and Praiſe God for? No need of being inſtructed out of the Word of God; That you take no care to be preſent when the *Pſalms* and the *Chapters* are Read? Have you no wants either of Body or Soul to make known unto God; no Judgments to Deprecate, nor Bleſſings to Implore, that you come not into the Congregation early enough to joyn in the *Litany*, and other Prayers of the Church? Surely, my Brethren, if you were ſenſible of your own Condition, How much Mercy you want, and how many Necessities preſs you, it would make you weep as *Eſau* did when he came to his Father too late to receive his Bleſſing, as oft as you come into the Congregation too late to joyn with it in Prayers, and Thankſgivings. Is it no wrong to your Souls to loſe an Opportunity of diſburthening your Conſciences, and of ſeeking to be Reconciled with your Heavenly Father?

But if there was nothing of this nature in the Case, yet the Indecency is very great. For is not a very

derly thing for Members of the same Society to come gether in such a manner, as if they had not all the me wants: or not all the same Priviledges? Were u invited to a Feast, would you stay so long, till it s almost over, before you made your Appearance? r had you Business at a Market, would you trifle ay your time at home till it was over? And can you ink it no disorderly thing to have your Prayers to be-n, when others have almost done theirs? or to come o God's House of Prayer, when the time of Pray-g is almost over?

But perhaps you come not to Pray, or at least not th the Prayers of the Church. This is a Prejudice I ieve that is the Occasion of the Indifferency of many ong you, who have received ill impressions con-ning the Form of Prayers prescribed by the Church, believe that they discharge their Duty if they come time enough to hear the Sermon, or to joyn with Minister in his Pulpit Prayer. This is a Prejudice t has been instill'd into you with much industry, to great Mischief of true Religion and Godliness a-ng us. For while Men are put upon contending ut so trifling a Matter as the bare Modes of Worship Forms of Words, they lose that Spirit of Piety Devotion wherewith they ought to Address them-es to God. And if we allow that this was done at First upon a sincere concern for the Purity of Re-on, and a firm persuasion that prescribed Prayers are to be allowed of; yet one wou'd think it high time us to grow Wiser, when we consider what mischief Contest has occasion'd; and that they who first be-it have been so far from making Men more truly s and Religious, that this is certain in the first place, have given the greatest occasion that cou'd possi-be given, for the making so many Prayerless Fami-as there are Masters of Families who are not able ray Extempore: And have imbib'd this most per-ous Doctrine, that it is better not to Pray at all than ray by a Form. And it is also as certain, Secondly, they have only turned Mens Zeal and D votions n meer Niceties; and taught them to think so dis-

honourably

honourably of God, as if he was ſo Whimſical a Being to like of a Petition when offered one way, and to diſlike it when offered another. Methinks it ſhould make you aſhamed to think how ſorry a Being a Conteſt of this Nature does repreſent God to be. For why are words when read out of a Book, leſs acceptable with him, than when ſpoken by the Miniſter in an Extempore way? You do not think ſurely that the bare Uſe of Words is unlawful; and if we may Expreſs the Senſe of our Minds in words, why not one way as well as another; if they be Decent and Grave, and Expreſſive of thoſe Wants and Neceſſities which are proper to be laid before God? Oh! Would to God you would at the laſt weigh this Matter ſeriouſly, and without any Partial Inclinations to one ſide more than another, for then I am very confident you would find your Minds to be unſettled without Reaſon, and blame your ſelves for ſlighting the Prayers of your Congregation: Then would you ceaſe to contend againſt, or diſlike a Form of Prayer, which, if offered up with Piety and Devotion, God will accept of it; and believe that you ought to join in the Prayers of a Congregation that you have no Reaſon to believe but have God amongſt them. I make no queſtion but you ſpeak the real ſenſe of your Minds, when you ſay there is another way of Praying that is more pleaſing to you: But is that a Reaſon why you think it more acceptable with God? Are you ſure that you judge in this Caſe as he does, and that it is not a ſickly Fancy that governs you? For my part I make queſtion, whether that other way of Praying, how grateful ſoever it is to your Minds, be at all pleaſing to God, when your liking it is the Occaſion of a Contempt of a wholſome Form of Prayer, which that Church you are a Member of does oblige you to; However I am certain no Reaſon can be given from the Nature of the Thing, why any Man ſhould ſuppoſe it to be more pleaſing to God.

Oh then, my Brethren! I beſeech you to take heed how you make your Fancies the Meaſure whereby you judge of what is Good or Ill; or in other words, what is pleaſing or diſpleaſing to God. For aſſure your ſelves

elves, nothing is more Variable and Inconstant, than the Fancies of Men. Do not think meanly of the Churches publick Prayers, only because you have bent your Fancies another way; but consider them as representing your Wants both of Soul and Body, Truly and Faithfully: Which if you did, you would be ashamed of slighting those Prayers which are fitted to your Condition, and which you have as much Reason to say Amen to, as to any that you like better; Nay, which you ought to like as well as any; for you ought to like of none but because the Petitions are united to your Case.

And now, my Brethren, give me leave to tell you, that I have set these things before you for no other End than the Advancing of true Piety and Religion among you. And would you but read this Letter with the same Spirit, with which I have written it, you would not Labour for Objections against any thing delivered in it, but excuse what is Weak, and readily comply with all that is Reasonable in it. Oh then! Let me beseech you, by the tender regard you ought to bear your own Souls, to lay these things seriously to your Hearts, and to Resolve, that in those things that you either have been Careless or not Regular, you will mend your Ways and your doings. Oh then! If there be in you any Bowels of Compassion for your Crucified Lord, any tender Respects for Religion, any kind Inclination towards Piety, or any sorrowful Regrets for the Growth of Impiety, let the Exhortation I have now addressed to you, awake in you a Holy Resolution to do what in you lies, that Christ's Holy Religion may not be driven from among us by Atheism and Impiety. Resolve to oppose their further Growth, by teaching your Families to serve the Lord, and by becoming your selves Eminent Patterns of that *Holiness* *without which* alone you must *see the Lord.* Make Religion your business; since it is that you must live by for ever. Set up the Practice of it in your own Houses, and Encourage nothing more in your Childten and Servants, than Exercises of Piety and Devotion. Let every thing that has a Relation to God be treated by you as Sacred,

cred, and abhor nothing more than the Prophaning
Day and his Word, because of that Contempt that
a Behaviour reflects upon him. And above all thi
give God that Publick Honour that is due unto him,
Worshipping him in the Congregation of his Saints.
thus you would amend your doings, you would r
up the Reputation of Religion, the World would b
you for so happy a Change as you would make in it,
the Blessed above will with joy welcome you into t
Society, as true Patriots of their Heavenly Countr
Which happy Place that you may at last attain, by c
sidering your Ways and turning your Feet to the Te
monies of God, is the Hearty Prayer of a Minister
Christ Jesus.

A Prayer before the Communion.

O Moſt holy, holy, holy Lord God, the Father of Mercies, and God of all Comforts: Be thou ernally Bleſſed and Praiſed for *Creating us anew* Chriſt Jeſus *unto good Works*. rather then let us be ndone by our ſhameful Diſobedience. Thou Lord, *th ſent thy only begotten Son into the World*, (ador- be thy inconceivable Love!) *that whoſoever be- veth in him might not periſh, but have everlaſting ife.* For this end he hath laid down his Life, and deem'd us by his precious Blood, and is nov aſ- nded into Glory. We have felt the bleſſed fruits his Death, Reſurrection, and Royal Power, hereby *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all them at come to thee by him.* Thy Holy Spirit hath of- n breathed into our Hearts, and thy Servants, e Miniſters of thy Word, have often invited and pportun'd us to follow after our Saviour, to that eavenly Bliſs in which he lives. And now again ou vouchſafeſt us an opportunity of improving ur Chriſtian Devotion and Holineſs, in making ur neareſt approaches to thy Divine Majeſty. Fill , we pray thee, with a ſtrong ſence of thy boun- ous Goodneſs, and with Pious Diſpoſitions to re- ive more of it. Stir up in us thankful Acknow- dgments, hearty Reſolutions, and earneſt Deſires partake more and more of thy Divine Nature, d be better prepared to a bleſſed Tranſlation to at Glorious Place where our dear Saviour is. ur great unfruitfulneſs in the knowledge of Chriſt ay juſtly make thee deny thy gracious Influences: ut, O God of all Grace, Pardon us and make us tter, by the Blood of thy Son interceding for us, d the Power of thy Spirit working in us. Quick-

en

en our Souls to hear thy Word with greater Reve
rence; to ſing thy Praiſes with greater Chearfu
neſs; to pray to thee with more earneſt Affection
to approach thy Holy Table with the deepeſt Hu
mility and Devotion, and to receive the renewe
Pledges of thy Love, to our great increaſe in Fait
Hope and Love, to Thee and to all the Worl
that ſo this may be a good day to our Souls, and w
may be diſpoſed and enabled to ſpend the reſt of o
Days better, as becomes the Redeemed of t
Lord, who have taſted how gracious he is, a
who have received the Earneſt of Eternal Life.
that our Converſation may be in Heaven, by exe
ciſing Purity, Righteouſneſs, Mercy and Godlines
That we ſtudying to Glorify thee our Heavenly F
ther; by bearing much of this good Fruit, m
have the more aſſured hope, that thou wilt glori
us with thy ſelf. Hear us we beſeech thee, O m
Merciful Father; and after we have perfected H
lineſs here in thy fear, bring us to compleat o
Praiſes and Thankſgivings to thee in the great
ſembly of the Saints, through Jeſus Chriſt our Bl
ſed Lord and Saviour. To whom be Glory be
now and for ever. *Amen.*

A Prayer after the Communion.

O Eternally Bleſſed Lord God, Creator of all t
World; who art infinitely happy in the enj
ment of thy own Perfections, to whom we can
make thee the leaſt addition by the beſt of our S
vices. Thou, Lord, didſt form us in our Moth
Womb, and by a greater Mercy we are born ag
and made thy Children in Chriſt Jeſus. We bl
thee for the knowledge of thy Holy Goſpel, wh
in we read of the great Love of our Saviour in D

us, and the promiſe of his Spirit to Sanctifie and vern us; his Holy Precepts for the Rule of our tions, his Glorious Example to incite us, and the pe of Eternal bliſs by his Reſurrection, to encou- e us in well-doing. In the mean time we enjoy e the Society of thy Saints, the Miniſtry of thy gels, and the aſſiſtance of thy faithful Servants, Embaſſadors of Peace and Reconciliation with e. All which fruits of thy wonderful Love we e long enjoy'd; and thou haſt this day enter- 'd us at thy Table, where thou haſt refreſhed with the Communion of the Body and Blood of riſt Jeſus, the Earneſt of a bleſſed Reſurrection, the Pledge of Immortality: beſides innumerable er good things which thy Mercy has beſtowed n our Bodies in order to comfort and refreſh us his Life. Give us a due ſenſe of all thy Mercies, ſo by a renewed acknowledgment thereof, we y be ſtirred up to all good Works. O that the d Jeſus may be alway in our Thoughts; that hing may be ſo dear unto us in this World, as Holineſs, his Humility, his Goodneſs, Charity, ekneſs and Patience. Fix our Affections more ſtedfaſtly on that Glory wherewith he is Crowned, his Obedient ſuffering of Death, that we may ne- be weary nor faint in well-doing; but continu- Faithful to Death, may alſo receive the Crown Life. We beſeech thee to accept of this our nden Duty, pity our Weakneſſes, pardon all Sins and Negligences, and deny us not the ce of thy Spirit to enable us to amend our Lives, Jeſus Chriſt his ſake, our Saviour and moſt pre- s Redeemer, in whoſe moſt Holy words we her Pray; *Our Father*, &c.

A Prayer in Private for the Lord's Day, before Morning Service.

O Moſt glorious Creator of the World, and m
ciful Redeemer of Mankind; who art ab
all our Thoughts, and exceleſt the Praiſes of
gels. *Thou art greatly to be feared in the Aſſembl
thy Saints, and to be had in reverence of all thoſe
are about thee.* I moſt humbly deſire leave to u
my ſelf with thoſe holy ones, to expreſs the
ſenſe I have of all thy Mercies, and to make
the beſt Oblation I am able, by devoting my
intirely to thy Obedience.

Since thou haſt graciouſly inclin'd me to e
thy Houſe, and there to ſet forth thy Praiſe, to
clare thy Goodneſs, to reſign my ſelf to thy W
to recommend my ſelf to thy Wiſdom, to ſubm
thy Government, to approve the Juſtice of thy L
to profeſs my ſelf thy ſervant, to renounce all
Enemies, and to teſtifie my Reſolution of follow
thee, againſt all the Temptations of the World,
Fleſh, and the Devil. Be pleaſed, Good Lord,
pardon my former Failings, and at this preſent
cept my Holy Intentions; and ſo inſpire me th
may carefully perform all theſe acts of Devotion.

Inſtruct me in my Duty, that I may correct
amend what is amiſs; Encourage and Strengthen
in my Reſolutions of Well-doing. Increaſe my
to thee and my Bleſſed Saviour, to thy Holy W
and all Holy Duties, and to all Mankind. Per
me in Wiſdom, Holineſs and Goodneſs, by all
Inſtructions, Mercies and Chaſtiſements: by all
Prayers, Praiſes and Thankſgivings, to thee the
ther of Mercies; make me ſuch as thou canſt L
and Delight in, and Reward at the Great Da
our Lord Jeſus, *Amen.*

A Prayer for Sunday Morning.

ALmighty and Eternal God, we thy Creatures are here proſtrate before thee, acknowledging our dependance upon thee, offering our Souls and Bodies as an Oblation to thy Service. We are unworthy to ſpeak to thy Majeſty, nor can our Words add any thing to thy Glory; But ſince thou art pleas'd in thine infinite Goodneſs not only to admit, but invite our Addreſs unto thee, we moſt humbly and thankfully receive this thy Grace and Favour towards us.

We laud and Magnifie thy Holy Name, which all the World proclaims with the higheſt Praiſes: But above all, we acknowledge thy ineſtimable Benefits beſtow'd upon Mankind in Chriſt Jeſus, the Son of thy Love, whom thou wert pleas'd to ſend among us in our own likeneſs, to aſſure us of thy Good will, to inſtruct us in our Duty, and to give us hope of immortal Life, by patient continuance in well-doing.

We commemorate with all Thankfulneſs his miraculous Birth, his holy Life, his bitter Agony and bloody Death, his glorious Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, his Triumph over the Powers of Darkneſs, his Dominion over Angels, whom thou haſt ſubject-ed to him. O God, how great was thy Love to Mankind, not only in paſſing by ſuch innumerable Offences whereby we had provoked thee, but in honouring our mortal Nature with ſo high a Glory, thy immenſe Love in chuſing us to be thy Sons and Heirs together with Chriſt Jeſus; to ſend the Holy Ghoſt to atteſt our Saviour's Reſurrection, and to make us abound in hope one day to be raiſed again, and keep a perpetual Reſt with our Lord and after in his Eternal Glory.

O that we could begin in it this day in Devout Meditions of theſe things. Liſt up our Minds we pray thee this Morning, above all theſe little things here below, which Diſtract our Thoughts from that Heavenly Bliſs: Let us ſeriouſly contemplate on it, till we be in Love with it and reſolve to ſeek it in thoſe ways wherein Jeſus hathgone before us tho' with the loſs of all we poſſeſs. It is but meet we ſhould reſign our will to thine, eſpecially ſince thy Love has been ſo great, that if we had been innocent, we durſt not preſume to have expected.

We are aſhamed, O Lord, that we have diſobeyed thee to whom we ſtand ſo deeply indebted: It grieves us that we have tranſgreſſed thy righteous Laws: We abhor the breaking them any more beſeeching not only thy gracious Pardon, but thy Acceptance of our entire Reſolution to agree with thy Will in all things for the time to come. We here ſolemnly dedicate all the Powers of our Souls and Bodies to thy Service, deſiring unfeignedly that all the Thoughts, Affections and Actions of our Life may be holy and unreprovable in thy Sight.

To which end grant us the Aſſiſtance of thy good Spirit, which our Lord hath encouraged us that wilt give to thoſe that earneſtly ask and ſeek it. O let thy mercy be upon us according to thy Word. Fill us with awful and reverend Thoughts of Thee as our Judge; ſettle in us an immutable Love to thee, and the higheſt eſteem of thy Grace, as better than Life it ſelf; that ſo we may ſtudy to approve our Hearts and Actions to thee.

Make it our delight to praiſe thee, to call to mind thy Loving-kindneſs, to offer to thee the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving, and to meditate on thy precious Promiſes.

Accept, good Lord, of all the Praiſes and Acknowledgments of all thy People met this day acc[ordi]

rding to thy Will; and aſſiſt us to render thee
l more affectionate Praiſes, in that moſt holy Aſ-
mbly to which we are going to joyn our ſelves:
t thy ways be known upon Earth, and thy ſaving
alth among all Nations. Hear us, O Lord, and make
y Face to ſhine upon us, that we may enter into
y Gates with Thankſgiving, and into thy Courts
th Praiſe, that we may be thankful unto thee,
d bleſs thy Name: For the Lord is good, his Mer-
is everlaſting; and his Truth endureth to all Ge-
rations, *Amen* and *Amen*. Our Father, *&c.*

A Prayer for Sunday Evening.

O Moſt Bleſſed God, the Father of all Mercies;
Thou reneweſt thy favours continually unto us,
which this is not the leaſt, that thou giveſt us
ve to come into thy Preſence, and make known
r Requeſts unto thee, by Prayer and Supplicati-
with Thankſgiving. We acknowledge, O Lord,
th Thankfulneſs thy loving-kindneſs to us, and
here again proſtrate before thee this Evening
acknowledg thy Goodneſs in making us ſuch ex-
lent Creatures, capable to know and love thee,
d of being made eternally happy with thee.
Bleſſed be thy Name, that we are ſtill alive, and
t we have lived thus long in Health and Plenty;
ereas our Eyes might have been conſumed with
ief, and our Bones ſore vexed. We are bound to thee
the free uſe of our Underſtandings, for the good
linations in our Wills, for our devout Affections,
all the advantages we have had by our Educa-
n and holy Examples; more eſpecially for the
minations of the Holy Ghoſt, the importunities
u haſt uſed to draw us to thee, and the precious
miſes whereby thy love in Chriſt conſtrains to an
ire obedience to thy Precepts.

We

We admire thy Goodneſs to all thy Creatures. Thou diffuſeſt thy Bleſſings in ſeveral ſtreams to e very one according to their Needs; and continueſt them even to thoſe who by their abundant Provocations daily offend thee.

O that all thy undeſerved Goodneſs may hav this effect upon us, to make us heartily love th and devoutly Worſhip thee, and hope in thee for e ver: That by a careful improvement of the know ledge of thee our God, and of our Lord Jeſus Chri by whom thou haſt given us all things to pertain un to Life, we may ſtill enjoy this ineſtimable Tre ſure, and that thy love may at laſt be finiſhed in thoſ eternal Joys he hath promiſed to the Faithful. An as we have been taught this Day out of thy Ho Word, and publickly acknowledg'd our Obligati ons to thee, and made profeſſion of our love an gratitude to thy Divine Majeſty; ſo help us th Week following openly to teſtify the truth of o Hearts, in a blameleſs Converſation, in all Humi ty, Meekneſs, Peace and Charity, with them th call on the Name of the Lord.

O that all our Friends may be thine; and if w have any Enemies, Father, forgive them. Comfo the ſick and needy, and all other diſtreſſed Perſo with an immovable belief of thy wiſe and good Pro vidence, to which give them Grace patiently an obediently to reſign themſelves. And when o Senſes this Night ſhall be bound up with ſleep, b thou, O Lord, our Keeper, and after the R freſhment of that Repoſe; and this Holy Re from our Labours, raiſe us in the Morning wi chearful Minds to return to them; praiſing fi thy multiplied Mercies to us in Chriſt Jeſus, whom we preſent our ſelves and Petitions to th ſaying as he hath taught us, *Our Father, &c.*

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